

UNHCR ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS WITH NGOS
3 – 5 JULY 2019

International Conference Center Geneva

DISCUSSION PAPER

Title of session: Thematic Conversation on Pledging and Showcasing: Protection Capacity

Date: Friday, 5 July 2019

Time/Room: 13:30 – 15:30 – Room 21

Executive Summary:

The Protection Capacity session will present innovative ideas on how NGOs can be engaged in supporting protection capacity related pledges and contributions at the Global Refugee Forum by showcasing civil society initiatives from different geographic regions. The session will include an interactive presentation by UNHCR on the ways in which NGOs can engage with the Asylum Capacity Support Group (ACSG) and support the strengthening of national asylum systems, both directly and through engagement with state or other counterparts. In addition to the ACSG portion of the session, there will be a panel of speakers representing three different civil society organizations which have been engaged in good practices working with government and other stakeholders to increase protection capacities in the areas of legal representation and information on asylum, state capacity development and participation in the development and resourcing of national arrangements under the CRRF. Participants at the session will also have time to share their own ideas for contributions and good practices on protection and have the opportunity to pose questions.

Concept Note:

- **Background and link to the theme**

Protection capacity is one of the thematic areas identified as in need of contributions and support at the Global Refugee Forum. Strong protection capacity optimizes the absorption of refugees in host communities, allows for efficient and effective use of resources and can result in overall strengthening of state institutions. Protection capacity encompasses a wide range of capacities and activities, including preparedness, promulgation of robust legislative frameworks for forced displacement, increased national leadership and ownership of the refugee response, ensuring strong registration and protection sensitive entry systems, as well as putting in place asylum processes that are fair, efficient, adaptable and that have integrity. NGOs have substantial expertise in protection and, therefore, this session represents an opportunity to share best practices and develop concrete ideas of possible individual and joint pledges and contributions at the Global Refugee Forum as well as expand on

strategic ways that NGOs can be involved in complementary advocacy in the formation of state pledges.

- **Objective(s) of the session**

The session will expand on the ways that NGOs can be involved in supporting the development of protection capacities in the lead up and beyond the Global Refugee Forum, by helping to provide ideas and explore opportunities for NGO pledges and contributions. NGOs have long played an important role capacitating states in the area of protection and often themselves serve key protection functions. There will be a portion of the session that will provide an opportunity to discuss the ACSG and how NGOs could make related pledges, as well as how they can effectively support states in formulating pledges in relation to asylum systems and institution building. The panel portion of the session will provide three concrete examples where NGOs are currently working to enhance protection capacity in the areas of legal advice and representation, working with educational stakeholders and supporting national arrangements. After a brief presentation on each example, a moderated discussion will take place to allow NGOs to discuss how such examples could be transformed into pledging opportunities and to chart a way forward to the Global Refugee Forum.

- **Desired outcome of the session:**

- NGOs would come away with concrete ideas on how to be strategically involved in the formulation of individual and joint pledges and contributions at the Global Refugee Forum as well as how to effectively advocate for protection capacity pledges from states and other stakeholders. The good practice examples provided at the session will provide ideas for concrete steps that NGOs working on protection capacities could take in the coming months to maximize the number of protection capacity related pledges and contributions at the Forum.

- **Methodology & choreography**

- Interactive Presentation on ACSG (Brief UNHCR Presentation, Q&A) using a pigeonhole
- Moderated three member panel (may involve brief PowerPoints by presenters)
- Discussion